

one of the obvious outcomes of this pandemic is the mental health challenge that is facing all Americans, and particularly young Americans.

We risk losing a proposed \$400 increase in the maximum Pell grant, just as schools and students are trying to finalize financial aid packages. Too many students have put off their college education due to economic hardship and uncertainty during the pandemic. This Congress should not make matters worse by withholding student aid.

A CR would also be a slap in the face to the Capitol Police, who have been stretched to the limit in the aftermath of the January 6 assault on the Capitol. It would deny the department needed funding to hire new officers, for overtime and retention payments, as well as resources for officer wellness and mental health support.

Chairman LEAHY has bent over backward to engage our Republican colleagues. Four months into the fiscal year, we need them to reach an agreement. Otherwise, we risk a full-year CR in which everybody loses—most of all the American people.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. First of all, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak for up to 7 minutes and Senator BARRASSO be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes prior to the scheduled rollcall votes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. MORAN pertaining to the introduction of S. 3541 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. MORAN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, first, I would like to commend my colleague, the senior Senator from Kansas, for his incredible ongoing leadership on the issue of the veterans of our Nation and his strong commitment to each and every one of those veterans and to the men and women who wear the uniform and go to battle to keep us safe and keep us free, and it is his long history of leadership for which I am most grateful.

#### ENERGY

Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about a different issue, and that is the need for more American energy.

Right now, the American people are facing the worst inflation in 40 years. In November, we saw the biggest price

increases from an energy standpoint in 10 years. CNBC reports that one in five American families could not afford to pay an energy bill this past year. Roughly the same number of Americans have kept their homes at an unhealthy temperature because they can't afford the cost of energy to heat it.

Gas prices have gone up by roughly \$1 a gallon since Joe Biden took office. This is the fastest increase in gas prices in 40 years. The price of gas affects the price of everything else. It is increasingly expensive in this country to transport goods from the farm and from the factory to the people who need the products. As a result, the American people aren't just paying more at the pump; they are also paying more at the grocery store.

So why are energy prices rising so quickly? Well, demand is up and supply is down. It is basic economics.

Under Joe Biden, American energy production still hasn't recovered in this country to the levels that we were producing energy prior to the pandemic. Why would that be? Because this is a direct result of the anti-American energy policies of this White House.

On his first day in office, Joe Biden killed the Keystone XL Pipeline. He blocked new oil and gas leases on public lands all across the country. He stopped the exploration for energy in the Arctic. He tried to ban exploration for energy off our coasts. He has threatened to raise taxes on American energy. So what happened? Well, as a result of this radical, anti-American, Biden energy agenda, we are failing to produce enough energy in this country, and people who have the capacity and ability to do it and have worked those jobs for a long time are having a hard time keeping a job.

America is now producing 1.4 million fewer barrels of oil each and every day than we were prior to the pandemic. We are now using more oil from Russia than we are from Alaska. This is specifically the result of the Biden policies.

Joe Biden is attacking American energy. He is turning into a great salesman for Russian energy. I mean, why is it that right now, we are importing twice as much—twice as much—crude oil from Russia as we did a year ago? It is because of Joe Biden. Joe Biden has even had his National Security Advisor plead with Russia to produce more oil to sell to the United States.

I know the Presiding Officer may find that very hard to believe, but all you have to do is go to the White House's website and read the sad fact.

Just months after he killed the Keystone Pipeline, Joe Biden gave a big stamp of approval to Vladimir Putin—to Putin—for his pipeline, the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline. He killed the American pipeline and approved the Russian pipeline. Joe Biden's energy policy is, pipelines for Putin and no pipeline for the American people, and the American

people have been paying the price as a result. It seems that Joe Biden would rather have us buy energy from our enemies than have us produce the energy in our country and sell it to our friends.

So, as a result of the Biden policies, Vladimir Putin has hit the energy financial jackpot. For decades, Putin has used energy as a geopolitical weapon. How does he use it? He uses it to coerce and intimidate, and that includes our allies. We saw this in November when Putin shut off the flow of natural gas to Moldova. By giving Vladimir Putin Nord Stream 2, President Biden gave Putin a new geopolitical weapon, and now Putin is emboldened, and he is flush with cash.

Right now, today, Vladimir Putin is preparing to do something he has wanted to do for years. He has amassed over 100,000 troops on the border with Ukraine. With the Winter Olympics about to begin in China, Russia is expected to invade Ukraine. If Russia invades, this will only worsen the energy crisis in that part of the world but also here as well.

Vladimir Putin is cunning, he is opportunistic, and he is aggressive. When he sees an opportunity, he takes it. Putin can smell weakness, and he views our President, Joe Biden, as weak and ineffective.

The sledgehammer we have against Putin is to shut down the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline and to do it permanently. Last month, this body had an opportunity to do just that. Yet Senate Democrats filibustered the bill. The same Democrats who voted to get rid of the filibuster on the floor of the Senate used the filibuster to shut down a bill that many of them have supported for years. This is hypocrisy at its worst.

Democrats, last week, based on lobbying from the White House, refused to sanction Putin's pipeline. The Nord Stream 2 Pipeline is going to lead to an enormous transfer of wealth from our allies to our enemies. It is going to make our allies weaker, and it is going to make Vladimir Putin that much stronger. When Putin gets stronger and wealthier, what does he do? Well, he tends to become more aggressive. It is not just a threat to Europe; it is a threat to the whole world.

So I have introduced legislation called the ESCAPE Act. My bill imposes mandatory sanctions on Russian pipeline projects, and it expedites the sales of American natural gas to our NATO allies.

We have the ability to produce massive amounts of more energy in the United States than Joe Biden and the Democrats are allowing our country to produce, and, of course, the Democrats are killing jobs and hurting paychecks in the process.

It is incumbent upon us to give our allies an opportunity to have energy and not be beholden to Vladimir Putin's supply. We need to produce it here. We have it here. We should be producing it here.

Vladimir Putin knows how to turn off the lights, and he knows how to raise energy prices in foreign countries. We can't let Europe become more dependent on Vladimir Putin for anything, and neither should we become more dependent, although that seems to be the Biden policy. Buy more crude oil from Russia than we were a year ago—Joe Biden in action.

We need to expand our exports. We need to expand the production of American energy. We have it, and we have the capacity to do it. If we want to reduce inflation—and that is the No. 1 topic I heard about in Wyoming this past week as I traveled around and visited with high school groups, rotary clubs, people in diners, and folks all around the State in many, many communities—then why aren't we just producing more energy at home? That will help bring down the costs at the pump, the cost to heat, and the cost to get goods to market.

We need to be producing it in America, in this country, and not be beholden to the far-left extremists who want energy costs to go up when the American people are struggling to get by. Energy is called the master resource for a reason. It powers our Nation. It powers our military. It powers our economy. The same is true for our allies. We should not allow our allies to fall into the clutches of Vladimir Putin, even though that is what Joe Biden's policies are doing today.

We need more American energy, not less, and we need it now.

I yield the floor.

#### VOTE ON RUIZ NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). Under the previous order, all postcloture time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Ruiz nomination?

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN), is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) and the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) would have voted "nay."

The result was announced—yeas 62, nays 35, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 17 Ex.]

#### YEAS—62

Baldwin	Capito	Duckworth
Bennet	Cardin	Durbin
Blumenthal	Carper	Feinstein
Blunt	Casey	Gillibrand
Booker	Collins	Graham
Brown	Coons	Grassley
Burr	Cornyn	Hassan
Cantwell	Cortez Masto	Heinrich

Hickenlooper	Murphy	Sinema
Hirono	Murray	Smith
Kaine	Ossoff	Stabenow
Kelly	Padilla	Tester
King	Peters	Tillis
Klobuchar	Portman	Toomey
Leahy	Reed	Van Hollen
Manchin	Rosen	Warner
Markey	Rounds	Warnock
McConnell	Sanders	Warren
Menendez	Schatz	Whitehouse
Merkley	Schumer	Wyden
Murkowski	Shaheen	

#### NAYS—35

Barrasso	Hagerty	Risch
Blackburn	Hawley	Rubio
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Braun	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Kennedy	Shelby
Cramer	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Cruz	Lummis	Tuberville
Daines	Marshall	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	Young
Fischer	Paul	

#### NOT VOTING—3

Hoeven	Luján	Romney
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 404, Rupa Ranga Puttagunta, of the District of Columbia, to be Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

Charles E. Schumer, Gary C. Peters, Sheldon Whitehouse, Richard J. Durbin, Richard Blumenthal, Catherine Cortez Masto, Jacky Rosen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Mark Kelly, Benjamin L. Cardin, Brian Schatz, Debbie Stabenow, Angus S. King, Jr., Patrick J. Leahy, Martin Heinrich, Tim Kaine, Chris Van Hollen.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Rupa Ranga Puttagunta, of the District of Columbia, to be Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Mexico, (Mr. LUJÁN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) and the Senator from Utah, (Mr. ROMNEY).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) would have noted "nay".

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 59, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 18 Ex.]

#### YEAS—59

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hirono	Rounds
Blunt	Kaine	Sanders
Booker	Kelly	Schatz
Brown	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Capito	Leahy	Sinema
Cardin	Manchin	Smith
Carper	Markey	Stabenow
Casey	McConnell	Tester
Collins	Menendez	Tillis
Coons	Merkley	Toomey
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murphy	Warner
Durbin	Murray	Warnock
Feinstein	Ossoff	Warren
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Graham	Peters	Wyden
Hassan	Portman	

#### NAYS—38

Barrasso	Fischer	Paul
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Boozman	Hagerty	Rubio
Braun	Hawley	Sasse
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Johnson	Shelby
Cotton	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cramer	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tuberville
Cruz	Lummis	Wicker
Daines	Marshall	Young
Ernst	Moran	

#### NOT VOTING—3

Hoeven	Luján	Romney
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The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PETERS). On this vote, the yeas are 59, the nays are 38.

The motion is agreed to.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Rupa Ranga Puttagunta, of the District of Columbia, to be Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 406, Kenia Seoane Lopez, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

Charles E. Schumer, Gary C. Peters, Sheldon Whitehouse, Richard J. Durbin, Richard Blumenthal, Catherine Cortez Masto, Jacky Rosen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Mark Kelly, Benjamin L. Cardin, Brian Schatz, Debbie Stabenow, Angus S. King, Jr., Patrick J.